

resolve, therefore, if we have been carelessly or otherwise negligent in attendance at county society meetings, to improve in this respect.

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County Society and Hospital Staff Meetings.

—One more thought, in relation to meetings of hospital staffs. In recent years, in order to promote higher standards in hospital service—through individual and collective effort and the work of attending staff members—much thought has been given to meetings of hospital staffs, mandatory attendance being required in some instances. Excellent and valuable as are such gatherings, however, they should not occupy a place paramount to that allocated to the county medical societies. Let it not be forgotten, that hospitals also need the support of organized medicine, and when their interests are endangered, they turn to the local and state societies for advice and support.

* * *

County Society Officers Should Plan Programs Now.

—Officers of county medical societies and their program committees also have responsibilities, since poor or hastily gotten-up presentations and papers, perhaps of only mediocre or lesser worth, are not sufficient compensation to listeners who may have disarranged their schedules in order to be present. The midsummer postvacation meetings will soon begin, and committees in charge should meet now, and outline, in at least skeleton form, the general nature and scope of the programs for the fall and winter months. Such consideration and prearrangement may go far in securing a better attendance than would otherwise be possible. The truth of this has been shown in many societies, the meetings of one year being excellent and well attended, and in another year the reverse, according as the officers in charge gave time and thought to adequate preparation. Good programs cannot be drawn out of the thin air. They must be carefully arranged, and in advance. Officers and program committees, having been honored through official positions, should do their bit in this, and strive to meet these responsibilities. Good attendance at the meetings of county societies will make it possible for organized medicine to do its work to better advantage. Excellent programs will promote such better attendance.

ON VARIOUS TOPICS: A. M. A. SESSION—FATE OF TWO C. M. A. RESOLUTIONS; INSTITUTES ON WARTIME INDUSTRIAL HEALTH; TRIBUTES TO THE MEDICAL PROFESSION BY CALIFORNIA NEWSPAPERS; TUBERCULOSIS SUPPLEMENT IN THE JULY NUMBER OF C. & W. M.

A. M. A. Session: Fate of Two C. M. A. Resolutions.—In Atlantic City, where the American Medical Association in June last held its 93d annual session, two resolutions were pre-

sented by C. M. A. delegates, in accordance with instructions given by the House of Delegates of the California Medical Association at the recent Del Monte meeting on May 6th.

The minutes of the C. M. A. House of Delegates appeared in the July issue of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, and the hope is expressed that many members have taken the time to at least scan the pages, 59-91, which record the proceedings, and to acquaint themselves with the matters in which our component county societies are interested.

Special mention may be made of the following resolutions: (a) Relations between Physicians and Insurance Companies, by Dr. Garland (pages 67 and 87); and Rebates, by Wilbur Bailey (pages 67 and 87). These resolutions were presented to the House of Delegates of the American Medical Association, the first by Delegate Kinney (see J.A.M.A. of June 27, on pages 725 and 728) and the second, on Rebates, by Delegate Wilbur (see J.A.M.A. of June 27, on pages 724 and 728).

Because of their importance, excerpts from the reports of the Reference Committees to which these resolutions were sent, appear in this issue, in order that members of the California Medical Association may know what action was taken by the national organization*.

* * *

Institutes on Wartime Industrial Health.

—In the July issue of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, on page 101, in the Postgraduate Activities department, appeared a preliminary announcement and outline of a tentative program for meetings to be held as follows:

San Francisco on August 18 (Tuesday).

Crockett on August 19 (Wednesday).

Oakland on August 21 (Friday).

San Diego on August 25 (Tuesday).

Inglewood on August 26 (Wednesday).

Glendale on August 27 (Thursday).

Huntington Park on August 28 (Friday).

The current issue, in the Postgraduate department, presents additional information. The importance of increased interest and knowledge concerning industrial diseases and injuries cannot be gainsaid. All concerned—governmental authorities and citizens alike—are fully aware of the significance of maximum output in essential industries, if our Country is to fight on to Victory. But that desired output will be possible only if fellow citizens who are engaged in such work are kept in best physical condition, so that every available man- and work-hour may count and be of service in the struggles ahead.

The Institutes on Wartime Industrial Health are sponsored by three organizations, which have united their efforts in a desire to secure best results: California State Board of Public Health, California Medical Association, and Western Association of Industrial Physicians and Surgeons.

Coöperation of officers and members of com-

* For A.M.A. proceedings, see page 151.

ponent county societies in the districts to be visited is requested. Members are urged to arrange their schedules to permit attendance at both afternoon and evening meetings, for the time will be well spent. Here is an opportunity for every physician still in civilian practice, to show his willingness to aid in carrying through our war efforts to successful conclusion.

* * *

Tributes to the Medical Profession by California Newspapers.—Were you among those who by chance noted the editorial and other excerpts taken California newspapers, printed in the July issue on pages 109-110, and containing complimentary comment on the contributions now being made at the battle and home fronts by the medical profession; and, if so, was it not a bit gratifying to realize that the work of physicians is really appreciated in many places?

It is unfortunate that physicians are often negligent in maintaining cordial, social and other relationships with the editors of local newspapers. It should not be forgotten that successful newspaper publishers are usually keen students of human nature. Otherwise they would not be able to sense or mold public opinion.

If you are acquainted with the editors of your local publications, why not maintain contacts, and on occasion express to them the appreciation of the profession for their kindly thoughts? It will be easier then to confer with them when public health issues are at stake.

* * *

Tuberculosis Supplement in the July Number of C. & W. M.—Mention has been made above of the joint endeavors of the C. M. A. and two other agencies, concerning publicity designed to promote interest and attendance at the Institutes of Wartime Industrial Health. In last month's issue of our OFFICIAL JOURNAL, in the Tuberculosis Supplement (pages 19-58) appeared another example of such coöperative work. Readers, therefore, who failed to note the articles have denied themselves an opportunity of securing a rapid survey of the latest work in tuberculosis diagnosis and therapy, as presented by California and other colleagues. The almost two score papers (of which there is an index on page 19 of the July issue), some in full but most in digest form, are worthy of more than casual inspection. Many readers will no doubt wish to lay this number aside for special future use and reference. The California Medical Association was happy to participate in the effort to bring to the attention of the physicians of the State the outlines of the excellent papers read at the joint meeting of the California Tuberculosis Association and California Trudeau Society, in April last.

The observer listens to Nature; the experimenter forces her to unveil herself.—*Cuvier*.

The life line varies inversely with the waist line.

The Greeks had a word for high living: Hyperpiesis.

EDITORIAL COMMENT†

"SPONTANEOUS" AVITAMINOSIS

Production of "egg-white injury," or "secondary biotin deficiency" in human volunteers is currently reported by Sydenstricker¹ and his colleagues, of the University of Georgia and the National Institute of Health.

The indigestibility of raw egg-white was first described by Steinitz in 1898, and afterwards studied in detail by Bateman,² who found that ingested raw egg-white is given off almost quantitatively in the stools (dogs, rats, rabbits and man) and exerts a mild toxic effect, as shown by the accompanying diarrhoea and progressive loss of weight. He attributed the indigestibility and resulting toxic effects to the antitryptic action of raw egg albumin. The toxic effects were studied in greater detail by Boas³ about twenty years later, who found that rats fed an adequate, well-balanced daily ration, except for a large excess of raw egg as the source of protein, developed a peculiar dermatitis, accompanied by a gradual loss of weight, which eventually proved fatal. Similar "toxic" symptoms were afterwards demonstrated in the chick, guinea pig, rabbit, monkey and dog fed an excess diet of raw egg-white. Fractionation of the egg-white soon led to the conclusion that the toxic agent is in the albumin fraction; conceivably a toxalbumin of teleological significance.

Boas found that aqueous extracts of yeast, and of many vegetables, are able to prevent or cure the "toxic" symptoms. The presumptive "natural antitoxin" in these foods, originally designated as "protective factor X"³ or "vitamin H," was afterwards shown by György⁴ to be identical with biotin. Applying newer methods of biotin assay, György⁵ and his colleagues developed a logical and consistent theory as to the dynamics of "egg-white injury." They found that uncooked egg albumin is capable of inactivating biotin in vitro, due to the formation of a fairly stable and relatively undigestible biotin-albumin complex, and suggested the term "avidalbumin" or "avidin" for the "toxic" factor. The "toxic" effects were presumably due to its power of binding or inactivating biotin, thus preventing adequate intestinal absorption of this necessary vitamin. "Egg-white injury" thus became a "spontaneous avitaminosis," due to gastro-intestinal "biotin blockade." Tissue assays invariably showed a marked biotin deficiency in egg-white injured animals, in spite of adequate biotin in the ingested food.

In order to determine whether or not a similar "biotin blockade" is possible in man, the University of Georgia research group placed a small

† This department of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE presents editorial comments by contributing members on items of medical progress, science and practice, and on topics from recent medical books or journals. An invitation is extended to all members of the California Medical Association to submit brief editorial discussions suitable for publication in this department. No presentation should be over five hundred words in length.